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Interview with Philip Lee Secrist

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KENNESAW STATE UNIVERSITY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW WITH PHILIP LEE SECRIST

CONDUCTED AND EDITED BY THOMAS ALLAN SCOTT

for the

COBB COUNTY ORAL HISTORY SERIES, NO. 84

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Kennesaw State University Oral History Project
Cobb County Oral History Series, No. 84
Interview with Philip Lee Secrist
Conducted, edited, and indexed by Thomas Allan Scott
Wednesday, 26 December 2001
Location: Secrist home, Kennesaw, Georgia

T. SCOTT: Phil, for the record, where were you born and when were you born?

P. SECRIST: Tom, I was born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin on May 4, 1928.

TS: I know you moved down to Tennessee somewhere in your childhood.

PS: Five years old to the Maryville, Tennessee area, Blount County.

TS: So you grew up in Maryville then.

PS: In Blount County, yes, just outside.

TS: Outside of Maryville. What brought you down to Blount County?

PS: That's the family home, Dad's home. His parents lived there in Blount County. His dad had been a railroad man and worked in the shops through Etowah and up towards Blount County. So when he got ready to retire he had the plan. The plan was to buy the farm, which he did, and moved there in 1916. So that was where Dad left and went to Milwaukee to get training as an electrician. That's where he met my mother. She was a Milwaukee girl.

TS: And so he just stayed there . . .

PS: To finish his training. We came south in 1933 in the midst of the Depression in two T-models.

TS: Did he farm once he got down to Blount County?

PS: No, he looked for a job like everybody else was in 1933. Then the TVA [Tennessee Valley Authority] program cranked up, and he worked on the hydroelectric dams as an electrician the rest of the time.

TS: Which dams did he work on?

PS: The Chickamauga. Watts Bar. I think he worked on the Kentucky Dam. He started at Norris Dam. So on several of them.

TS: Well, my father was an electrical engineer for TVA, and he came there right after World War II. That's how we got to Knoxville was TVA.

PS: Where were you all from?

TS: Well, the family was from West Tennessee, over in Obion County, right in the northwest corner, but both my mother and my father had gone north for a while, my father up to Chicago to find work. He started out as an electrician up there reading meters to begin with for Samuel Insull's Public Service Company of Northern Illinois.

PS: So where did he get his training as an engineer?

TS: Well, he really just picked it up on his own. He had about a year of college, but learned on the job. Then he worked in Memphis for a while for the power company over there before he got a job with TVA. He was in the maintenance part. Whenever there was a problem he'd go out and be the trouble shooter for different dams and stayed at TVA till he retired.

PS: Well, dad was with TVA I think till he retired. He'd had an accident. A ladder had gone away from him, and he had fallen. He injured his right knee. He retired and was living up in East Tennessee when he passed away several years ago.

TS: Well, there's a good chance they knew each other.

PS: Could be. Now, you all lived in the northwest corner of Tennessee. That's up near Reelfoot Lake, up in that area.

TS: Yes. Not far away from that at all.

PS: Earthquake.

TS: Yes, right. It was created in an 1811 earthquake.

KAY SECRIST: Well, my daddy used to go to Reelfoot Lake to fish.

TS: Is that right? That was [Phil's wife, Katherine Kimsey] Kay Secrist speaking.

PS: You're on tape, Kay.

TS: Well, now, let's see. The United States would have entered World War II when you were about thirteen years old.

PS: I was thirteen years old, and I spent the war years in high school, working in the summers of '44 and '45 at Alcoa in the war plant there, and graduated from high school in '46. The war was still officially on. Of course, Congress had declared it back in '41, and they would have to undeclared it. So one of the smartest things that I did at that age—someone told me that if you join the service before Congress declares the war over officially, you get the GI bill. So I hopped to it and joined the Marines and spent the

summer of '46 at Parris Island.

TS: Not the most pleasant place to be.

PS: No, it was hot—got through that year fine. I earned my GI bill, and my discharge listed me as a veteran of World War II. I was simply one of those that Congress was trying to get lined up as replacements at the end of the war to bring the guys home that had been injured. So that's why there was a hurry-up to get us in. I got out six months early because Congress decided they didn't need us after all.

TS: So you got out in . . .

PS: In '48.

TS: So you were there a year and a half. Wasn't Kay at Oak Ridge during that time?

PS: Kay was at Oak Ridge during the war years beginning in, was it '43, Kay?

KS: From '43 to '46.

TS: So she was building a bomb and didn't know it in those years.

PS: That's right.

KS: That's right!

TS: Okay, so you got out in '48. Is that when you enrolled at University of Tennessee?

PS: University of Tennessee, and I had a football scholarship.

TS: So you didn't need the GI bill.

PS: No, I didn't discourage it coming though [chuckle].

TS: How did they know to offer you a scholarship after being in the Marines?

PS: I got that scholarship playing service ball.

TS: Oh, did you?

PS: I played on a service team at Cherry Point, North Carolina, which was a Marine [Corps] Air [Station]. I played two seasons there and earned several offers. North Carolina was one, Tennessee, Duke. I had a chance to play, so I enjoyed that experience. I was due to go to Duke. It was on a Wednesday when I had a letter from Duke to come over and sign my grant in aid on Saturday. Somehow, the coaches at Tennessee learned that I was going to sign the papers at Duke. Well, they get interested. In those days, [the number of

athletic scholarships was] unrestricted. If you could afford it, you could give a scholarship. So that's what happened. Two assistant coaches brought me to Knoxville, introduced me to General [Robert R.] Neyland. He personally—and I can't believe this; it impressed the country boy in me—personally took me in town and took me down to the training table and introduced me to all these guys I'd been reading about, Hal Littleford [tailback, 1947-1949] and all that crowd—and spent the day with me. It's amazing. I signed the grant the day before I left—just the day before leaving for Duke. Life has a lot of strange things. Had I gone to Duke, Kay and I would never have met. She was already at the University of Tennessee. And my whole life would have been changed, you know. I probably would have played a lot more football because they were using a running offense and Hal Littleford was tailback at Tennessee. It was a running offense, but he left after my freshman year, and they moved to a passing offense.

TS: Tennessee was passing?

PS: Can you believe it?

TS: It's hard to believe. Was that with Hank Luaricella [tailback, 1949-1951]?

PS: Yes, Luaricella and I were freshman classmates [in 1948] and Ted Daffer [guard, 1949-1951] and all those big names that went on to be that national championship.

TS: Right. So did you play football all four years you were there?

PS: No, I played for two years and then went into Neyland's office after the second year. I played in a few games, but I was disappointed. I said, "General, I'd like to play more ball. What do you see me doing next year in terms of where I rank?" He says, "I don't see you any better than second string defense." Well, I wanted to play offense. So he said, "I'll tell you what. I'll get you a scholarship to Memphis State if you're interested." He picked up the phone and called Ralph Hatley down there, head coach, and I had a scholarship a few minutes later. So I went down to Memphis State and played a year down there. I was playing a lot of ball down there, but it wasn't the same. From Tennessee, it's just a big jump down. I never felt good about it. So I left after that season and came back to Tennessee and finished school.

TS: And graduated in '52?

PS: '52, right.

TS: And your degree was. . . ?

PS: Bachelor's of Science in Education.

TS: So you knew then you wanted to teach.

PS: To coach, primarily.

TS: When did you all get married?

PS: When Kay graduated in '49. We got married in '49.

TS: So you were married while you were finishing school?

PS: Last two years, yes.

TS: Now I saw something that you were at Ft. Benning for a while.

PS: That's my military story. I got out of the Marines in '48. I had the GI bill. I had the college scholarship, but I felt that my social life needed a little more money. So I joined the Navy Reserve unit there in Knoxville. Big mistake. That was 1949. So in 1950 you know what happens.

TS: Yes, the Korean War.

PS: I got called up, this time in the Navy to go to Norfolk to become a sailor. I wasn't happy at all. We had a Kefauver club (Senator [Estes] Kefauver) on the campus. [Kay] was the secretary/treasurer. She didn't like the idea of her husband going off to Korea either. So she wrote Kefauver. Would you believe it, about a week later the commander down in Norfolk gets in touch with me and says, "Secrist, you can go home now if you want. Senator Kefauver has interceded." So I got home to Knoxville, and it was too late to get in the winter quarter. This was in January of '51. So I didn't have any chance to get in school till spring. That's when I learned that the deferment Kefauver got me was only good through the current school year. So in June I had to go back to Norfolk and finish getting ready for sea duty unless I joined the college ROTC. Then I could get the discharge from the Navy Reserve. Since I'd had some military, I only had to take two years of ROTC. But that meant that when I finished school . . .

TS: You took the last two years?

PS: Last two years. When I finished school then I had to accept a commission of second lieutenant in the Army infantry. So I ended up in Ft. Benning in '52. After going through training, I played a little football down there too. I was finished with my officer's associate training in March of '53. And you know that the [Korean] peace talks ended in July, so I never had to go. That was my military career.

TS: So you got out then?

PS: I got out in '54.

TS: '54. So that's when you start looking for a teaching job?

PS: No, I went over to Auburn for a year and got a master's degree, an MS in Education

Administration.

TS: So '55 you graduated from Auburn?

PS: And I got to Atlanta, met Sid Scarborough down there, and he hired me as a coach at Hoke Smith High School. You ever heard of Hoke Smith?

TS: I've heard of Hoke Smith, sure, governor of Georgia in the early 20th century [1907-1909 and 1911] and U.S. senator [1911-1921].

PS: Yes. They had a high school down there [from 1947 to 1964] over near Capitol Homes, right downtown. That was a white slum at that point. We had some interesting characters on the football team.

TS: So kind of low income?

PS: Yes.

TS: And so you coached and taught history and . . .

PS: Found out I liked teaching history more than I did coaching, but then I transferred to Marietta High School and got a good job up here with French Johnson [head football coach, 1956-1972].

TS: So you were coaching when you came to Marietta High School?

PS: Yes, I came as a coach and a history teacher.

TS: I see. What year was that?

PS: That was '61. And I stayed at Marietta until '68. I coached varsity one year, but I was taking too much time out of the classroom. French ran that program like a college. He expected assistant coaches to turn the movie on [in the classroom] and head over to the field house, and I wouldn't do that. So I just resigned from the coaching part of it. They kept my salary the same at Marietta High School as if I was still coaching, so I was having a good experience teaching high school in Marietta High School.

TS: And then you went back to graduate school?

PS: In '68 I went to University of Georgia. I got a teaching assistantship there. I had used my GI bill: the Korean GI bill at Auburn, my World War II GI bill at Tennessee. So I was on my own at Georgia.

TS: What were you teaching under your assistantship at UGA?

PS: I was teaching regular survey classes at University of Georgia.

TS: History?

PS: Yes.

TS: And so you got your doctorate in what year?

PS: In '72. [Dissertation title: "The Public Pays the Piper: The People and Social Studies in Georgia Schools, 1930-1970"].

TS: And by that time you were teaching at Southern Tech, weren't you?

PS: Right. I was working on my dissertation and teaching at Southern Tech at the same time.

TS: And you stayed there several years, I guess, didn't you, before . . .

PS: Yes, I stayed there about three years, and they wanted me to take head of the department. [Dr. Robert] Bob Hays was talking about leaving. At that time Southern Tech was part of Georgia Tech. So I went down and talked to the honcho down at Georgia Tech. I just didn't have a good experience with him, so I decided I didn't want to do that. About that same time I got an offer to be the social science coordinator for Cobb County at a substantial raise in pay. So I worked there a year. I tried every way in the world to have input on hiring history teachers, and I made no headway at all. They were hiring coaches, you see. And I wrote a letter stating that in my opinion we were never going to improve our history program until we hired the teacher first and the coach second. That didn't go over very well. So anyhow, I resigned from that and ended up doing houses.

TS: So that's when you got into the historic preservation business.

PS: Right.

TS: Well, we've got a lot on Trammell Square and so on in another interview that you did. Trammell Square and then you did the Marlow House and Stanley House. So you have a number of major projects around Marietta that you did.

PS: Yes. We assembled the Baker House that had been moved down there to Reynolds Street and we bought that.

TS: Was the Baker House over in the way of the Powder Springs Connector?

PS: It was over there where the Sun Trust Bank is, down two houses. The Benson house was right on the corner where Sun Trust Bank is.

TS: Oh, so it was Benson and then Baker. And so you moved those two.

PS: Those had been moved before we bought them.

TS: Oh, really?

PS: Yes. You remember [E. Phillip] Phil McLemore?

TS: Yes.

PS: He initiated that effort. I'm not sure where the money came from.

TS: So Phil McLemore, was he working with the Downtown Marietta Development Authority?

PS: Yes, he was. And you were there when he was there.

TS: Yes.

PS: So he initiated that. Then we came in with the Trammell House right next door, you see, where those two houses had been moved [to Trammell Square]. That's when we got serious talking with the city about that. They were ready to tear those houses down because there had been a lot of complaints from the neighbors over there. It was kind of sensitive to a lot of blacks in that vicinity. So [the city] had a touchy situation. Dana Eastham was mayor during that time. So we got those two houses picked up and got financing and proceeded to do those.

TS: Now you said the houses had already been moved but where were they moved to before you got them?

PS: They were moved to that site.

TS: To the site where you were?

PS: Yes. And what we did was shift the location of the Benson House. The Baker House had been moved first, and then the Benson house was behind it. So we moved the Benson House around the Baker House and put it where it is now. We owned that lot where it's sitting now. Then we bought the Baptist parsonage. We did that ourselves and put that where the Benson House had been.

TS: Now, you say the houses were already moved over on Reynolds Street; did the city move them over there through Phil McLemore's efforts?

PS: Phil McLemore had a hand in it. Now I'm not sure that the city officially did that. What I suspect happened was the bank had a hand in funding that move.

TS: So somebody who was going to renovate them moved them. Or was Phil himself going to renovate them?

PS: Phil had the idea of doing that.

TS: He was going to do that as a private project. I see.

PS: I think he was.

TS: And then it got too big for him?

PS: Yes. I don't know the details, but he was glad to unload them. We were glad to pick them up. We had room then for the parsonage. Now Phil had ambitions for the parsonage too. He had done a lot of preparation for the move before we acquired it. We stepped in and got Joe Slater as a mover and did it ourselves then. But that's the only one we moved from the original site was the parsonage.

TS: Where was the parsonage originally?

PS: You know where First Baptist Church is. It was right next to it. It was the Baptist parsonage.

TS: Right next to where First Baptist is now on Church Street?

PS: Yes, you know where their Family Life building is—right next to the church itself? It was right in that lot there.

TS: Let's talk now about some of the historic groups you were involved in. I think you were probably on the original board of Cobb Landmarks or shortly afterward, weren't you?

PS: We were. Kay and I. Fred [D.] Bentley Sr. was involved, Jennie Tate Anderson. We met at the old Chamber of Commerce on [US] 41 one night. There were about six of us. That's when we organized the Cobb Landmarks. Now there was another lawyer there [Russell Grove] that actually did the paperwork. But that's how it got started. Now we served on the board and did the *Landmarker*, the news bulletin, for several years.

TS: Yes, and then you did the study for the bicentennial.

PS: Yes, they asked us. Fred Bentley took the initiative there and nominated us to do that. Then we got backing and support from the county and from the city, and that's how that happened.

TS: With the Downtown Marietta Development Authority you were the historian for the historic board of review, I guess, probably about late '70s to about '82.

PS: It must have been about that time. You came in right after me, I think.

TS: Yes. I think I was on it for about six years, and then you went back on it briefly before you became commission chair.

PS: I didn't remember that.

TS: Didn't you? I was thinking you did, I could be wrong.

PS: I don't think I came back in, but maybe I did. A lot of things were happening about then.

TS: Tell me about the creation of the Cobb County Historic Preservation Commission. How did that come about?

PS: Ernest Barrett deserves the credit for having the vision of seeing the importance of that. That was largely the promotional effort of this lady down in Vinings. She initiated it.

TS: Linda Cater?

PS: Yes. She hammered on Barrett. He saw the good in it, and the county put it together and created it. It was a great thing. Barrett wanted me to serve on it. I didn't know that he had personally suggested that. But Barrett finished his term. Earl Smith came in, and Earl appointed me to the first board of directors of that. He said that Barrett wanted me on that board.

TS: You didn't know Earl Smith before that?

PS: He was our heating and air [contractor] in the first house we built up here. That's the only way I knew him.

TS: The first house you built and you're pointing up here.

PS: We bought this twenty acres [off Frank Kirk Road] in 1960. At the other end is the house that we constructed in 1963, I believe. That's where we moved out here first was in that house. Then we sold that and five or six acres and did the house in Kingston, our first restoration. But that's, he did that job for us.

TS: He hadn't been here long himself when he did that job.

PS: I think this truck was brand new, really. He does a good job.

TS: So you went on the original board of the Historic Preservation Commission and served there until '88.

PS: I believe that's true.

TS: [The preservation] started the process of nominating properties for the local register.

PS: Yes, we did.

TS: Could you say something about the controversies involved with nominating properties?

TS: Well, we understood on the Preservation Commission that National Register listing and listing on the state historic register did not protect the structure from demolition. Then we worked to get a county ordinance that would accomplish that in some way. What we came up with then was a listing of buildings and sites within the county. Once they were listed, the owner had to come before the Preservation Commission to get permission to alter it—a "Certificate of Appropriateness" we called it. That was a difficult process because the owners came to understand that there were some encumbrances if they should be listed. When I got into office, very early we had a list of fifteen or twenty that we wanted put on the county [register]. We were having trouble with some of them. The Cheney House [Powder-Spring Road, ca. 1856] was tough.

TS: It seems like the daughter was quoted in the newspaper as opposed to it.

PS: Oh, very much so. And got a little bit heated at times.

TS: I guess they thought that it was going to infringe upon all their rights to [sell it].

PS: Yes. We had a good relationship with Mr. Newcomer who was the owner. He was the grandfather. The family, of course, saw the road improvements taking place, and they understood how this works. You put a four-lane in where it had been a two-lane before, and you go from R-20 zoning to commercial. It's a lot easier, and they saw the commercial price attractive. I can understand that. And so it wasn't with his request that they did this. The family, I think, were just primarily concerned that they protect their interests as heirs.

TS: Right. Early on the Commission declared the Concord covered bridge area as a district, didn't they?

PS: Yes, they did.

TS: Did you have troubles with any of the property owners there?

PS: We didn't have big troubles with the property owners, but there was the PEACH [Preserve Endangered Areas, Cobb's History] group got cranked up . . .

TS: So they were active that early?

PS: Some of their people were. I'm not sure that they actually had incorporated by that time. But basically the dilemma I got into on that was I'd been on the Preservation Commission when we set that area aside as an historic district. It included the Gann House as well as the Covered Bridge area. I came into office as commissioner, and I discovered that there was a long-standing commitment the county had with the southwestern part of the county—Austell area, Mableton—to put an east-west route through there to get over to the business areas. And that this was a promise of nearly twenty years. So my job then

came to be to find a way to put that through there with doing the least damage that we could do. And the problem to that was that the preservationists, led by [Pat Seay] of the PEACH group, invented some history, such as the Battle of Ruff's Mill, which didn't take place there at all. It was a mile away or three-quarters of a mile away. They used that [fictitious history] as leverage.

To make a long story short, I was caught in the middle of something there. I had to honor, in a reasonable fashion, that longstanding commitment to do that transportation through there. On the other hand, I was a preservationist, and I wanted to not see it happen at all. But we had to make it happen. So I was torn. That's when I really got hammered. I got hammered by both sides. So we did the best we could. When we finally got that through there, I had just left the commission. We had decided to route that thing in such a way that it's as far away from [the woolen mill] ruins as possible. I was confident and comfortable that we would not damage the ruins with any road construction. We were far enough away. But I couldn't sell the thought to the preservationists.

TS: So where the route goes now is where you had it when you left office?

PS: That's approximately where we had it. There was some massaging a little bit, but basically that was it.

TS: Well, it's not anywhere near those properties.

PS: Oh, no. I knew that there was no danger of weakening those ruins down in the old Concord mill. It became sort of a political football, and I earned me the animosity of the Cobb Landmarks real good. They fought my re-election, and I understand that too. But actually we need to understand that even a preservationist like me—when you're elected to public office, you have to deal with compromise a little bit. And as long as the principle integrity is not affected in any substantial fashion, to me that was the only way to go. You can't dig your heels in and say, "It's not going to happen," because they have courts. And those four years I was in office, there wasn't a day passed, Tom, that I wasn't named on another lawsuit by a developer.

TS: Right, anybody that got turned down for zoning?

PS: Anyone that got turned down, you can count on him heading for the Superior Court. And there we were. So that was a difficult situation.

TS: Now, let me ask you, on the East-West Connector, I think when you were on the Preservation Commission before you got elected commission chairman, the Preservation Commission itself opposed the route at that time for the East-West Connector.

PS: There were actually three routes proposed; you're aware of that, aren't you?

TS: Three. . . ?

PS: Three possible routes.

TS: Three—at different times?

PS: Well, they actually had an alternative.

TS: Oh, three at the same time?

PS: Three at the same time. And the one that I opposed most strongly was the one that was routed down Mud Creek right through all of that heavy action, trenches and forts. That's the one that I really dug my heels on. You can't do that. It's so much history in there. So that was the one that I refused to budge on. Then the one that finally came about was the one that you see now. The third [proposal] was a sort of between the Mud Creek proposed route and where it is now.

TS: So you supported the route that was furthest away from the historic structures.

PS: Right, yes. I didn't want to get as close to the Wallis House [Burnt Hickory Road, ca. 1853] as we did, but it wasn't going to destroy the Wallis House, or I think compromise the integrity of it.

TS: When did the idea of the Heritage Park emerge?

PS: That grew in the discussion. It was a give-and-take, Tom. You know, the county is willing to help fund this. Gary [F.] Eubanks was involved in this as the owner of part of that property [near the Concord Covered Bridge]. Gary didn't do me any favors either when he had that timber cut off before we finished that deal.

TS: Yes, they just clear-cut his land.

PS: He made the money off it. I thought we had an understanding that he wouldn't do that. But it happened, and that complicated things some. But the PEACH group, I have to give them credit. They invented a lot of history to strengthen their case, they thought. But they also hung in there and gave us an antagonist that we knew we had to deal with and forced us to make, as a county, certain compromises and certain benefits that we passed. Heritage Park was part of that.

TS: I see. So just the fact that they were taking a preservationist stance led to a better plan?

PS: I think so. I think that we would have gotten a lot less from the Eubanks and the others that were down there with ownership of that property.

TS: In other words, you could go to the others and say, "Look, we've got these crazies here opposing us . . ."

PS: Yes, basically we did some of that. So it worked out that way, and a lot of that was fine-tuned after I left office.

TS: I guess it was Bill Byrne then before it actually opened up.

PS: That's right. We had moved in that direction, and then Byrne came in. They finished the job.

TS: The Corps of Engineers was involved too over wetlands.

PS: Oh, the 106 review [Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act]—it was all county dollars but when we screwed up was when Wiersig, the county DOT man [Cobb Department of Transportation director]. . .

TS: Yes, what his his name? Doug?

PS: Doug Wiersig. And he's from Tennessee too, Tom [PhD in civil engineering, University of Tennessee, Knoxville].

TS: Oh was he?

PS: And he messed up. He moved a stream. That gets the 106 triggered. See, they had our county money. So we shouldn't have been involved with these reviews. But we got ourselves involved with the reviews because Doug decided, in order to make that crossing there, that he had to move the stream route a little bit, not much. Well, that gets the Corps of Engineers in. And if the Corps of Engineers comes in, the 106 review takes place. And oh, I busted him on that one. I told him, "Doug, don't do this. This is not good. I'm a preservationist, and I know that you're messing around with something that's going to get us in trouble." "Nah." And then it just all came in. Some of the other commissioners didn't like him at all. I was unhappy with him over that, but then they dismissed him. That was not a happy thought either, but, basically, he was a little bit hardheaded.

TS: He didn't really go out until just about the end of your term, did he?

PS: No, he went out about halfway through it.

TS: Did he?

PS: Yes, about halfway through it. And then we got his assistant, Jim Croy [director of Cobb County DOT, 1992-1999]. He just left not long ago. He had an engineering degree [civil engineering, Georgia Tech, 1971], so he could talk to the engineers down at DOT. And he had people skills that Doug Wiersig never dreamed of having.

TS: Another big preservation issue while you were commission chair was over the Bessemer project, the Johnston's River Line.

- PS: Yes, and I like to think that I had an important role in that.
- TS: I know that Bessemer [Securities Corporation] took the county to court, one of the many that sued you. I think they won, didn't they?
- PS: Here's what I remember. It was already in progress when I came into office.
- TS: If I remember correctly, it was over sixty acres that was on the National Register from Johnston's River Line? Is that right?
- PS: Yes, there was a controversial issue about how much of it was actually on the National Register. We had the consultant that put it on the National Register involved in the loop too. It's been a while since I reviewed that, but where I come in is that the county had stopped permitting the development of Bessemer on that [land]. So they were stopped cold—dead in the water. I came in, and I was familiar with the Johnston's River Line. I got in touch with the lead man in the Bessemer group [Bessemer vice president Howard Peck]. We spent, on and off, the better part of a year trying to work out a compromise. Bessemer was going to level that ridge there at the river where the Johnston's River Line is. Going to Discovery Boulevard now, you see a flat area on your left of the river. That's what the whole thing was going to look like all the way down. So we said no. I got in there, and mostly I was involved with the Bessemer people. I said, "We can't do that. That's just our property. And dah, dah, dah, dah, dah." So then they agreed to set aside some eighty or ninety acres in there and, in addition to that, all the flood plain up Nickajack [Creek]. We had over 150 acres that was involved in that. I had visions of walking trails along the creek and almost all the way up to the Ruff's Mill area. I thought it was a great plan. I talked to Thea Powell about it before I took it to the commission, the executive session. I had no idea that anybody could ever possibly object to preserving those eighty acres or so and all of this walking area past the park.
- TS: And Bessemer agreed to it.
- PS: And Bessemer had agreed to it. Otis Brumby [and the *Marietta Daily Journal*] got [the records of the executive session] out of Superior Court who ordered that we turn over the tape of that executive meeting. I presented [the agreement with Bessemer] to the commission at the executive meeting, and I got blind-sided. I guess it was stupidity or my innocence and so forth. I didn't see how anybody could say, "Hey, this isn't a good deal." Well, you know who did? Emmett Burton. Yeah. "What about all the drugs across the river? It's going to creep over into Cobb County. That's near Bankhead Highway, and so it's going to come over here."
- TS: Was it because you had a park there?
- PS: Yes, because we had a park there. So I went back to the board on that again, and we ended up getting involved with the 106 again. Liz Lyon [Elizabeth A. Lyon, director, Georgia Division of Historic Preservation] wanted that Yankee fort on the west side of

- Nickajack which faced the Shoupades, and the others bought into that too. And so we did that too.
- TS: You did include that?
- PS: Yes, we did end up getting that. And when I left it was just a matter of massaging the details of the boundaries and so forth. Byrne finished that job.
- TS: I know that there was some heated correspondence between you and Elizabeth Lyon. But she basically got what she wanted, I guess.
- PS: Yes, she got what she wanted. She got that federal fort there, and it worked out. It was endangering the old agreement though, and I thought it was a little superfluous to insist on having that.
- TS: So you're getting it from the preservation side, but you're also getting it from Emmett Burton, who doesn't want anything to happen at all.
- PS: That's right, he strictly had no interest at all in preservation. But that worked out. As you know, the last chapter so far is that I saw Bill Byrne this past spring or early summer. We were talking about the trails, and I said, "Oh, by the way . . .
- TS: Didn't you tell Bill Byrne that [Cobb had] the hundred acres that the county hasn't done anything with?
- PS: I said, "Why don't you have the county donate that to the state and [let it] become a state site? The state would have access to the monies so that we'll do something with it." He said, "That's a good idea." So he brought it up, and the commission passed it 100 percent. We've had a little trouble with the law department in Cobb County getting the paperwork done. It's a transaction that requires paperwork here. But [county attorney] Dottie Bishop talked about ten days ago, and she assured me that everything's done at the state now that needs to be there. And I'm in touch with Lonice Barrett, who's the commissioner of the Department of Natural Resources under which Historic Preservation is located. He's excited about it. All we need now is for them to do the paperwork at their end and present it to the Department of Natural Resources board. Then it becomes part of the package of the state. So that's worked out real good.
- TS: That'd be great. Of course, we have the Silver Comet Trail that both of us use that goes right through the East-West Connector area. So I guess our park situation has improved a lot in that area.
- PS: I think it has. There's a greater sensitivity to this kind of passive parks than there was twelve years ago.
- TS: I understand that Emmett Burton wasn't real happy about the idea of the Silver Comet Trail.

PS: On no, he had the same argument. "You're going through people's back yards. There'll be people coming in intruding on them. There'll be crime." The only park that a lot of people thought of in the county in 1988 was the athletic park, softball fields. Passive parks, they couldn't care less. But that's changing. And that Silver Comet thing is a slam-dunk, politically.

TS: It's used so much.

PS: Oh, it's amazing. And the commissioners in Polk and Paulding and Cobb all know that they've done something right. It's a lot of PR for them, so I'm delighted with it.

TS: Now, when you talked about being blind-sided in that executive commission meeting, Emmett Burton, I guess, was the most outspoken. But I gather that you didn't get a majority support?

PS: No, I didn't. I made a mistake. It's always good to sit down with everybody before a meeting such as that and get a reading. I had sat down with Thea, and she didn't have any problem with it. But I had not sat down with [Harvey] Paschal or Burton, and I should have.

TS: Was Harriet Smith on it then?

PS: Yes, Harriet Smith. I had mentioned it to Harriet, but I hadn't gotten a commitment from her. But anyhow we did a compromise and went back to a more restricted version. We missed getting all those flood plain trails that I wanted, but we got the historic site.

TS: So you look back at that now as being successful in the long run?

PS: In the long run. Just as the Heritage Park at Ruff's Mill was successful in the long run.

TS: Well, just reading your correspondence at the time, I think you were very hurt, it sounded to me, that preservationists were so strongly opposed to what you were trying to do on things like the East-West Connector and Bessemer.

PS: Well, I don't know whether I was hurt or I was kind of frustrated. I got an awful lot of bad PR that I think if there was better information they would have seen what we were trying to do. But, you know, you can only go as far as your influence will take you. I was doing everything in the world to get as much as I could heritage-wise and preservation-wise and still not kill the goose, you know. I think people who haven't been in politics directly don't really understand. I should have been perceived as a friend of the preservationists. I don't have to tell you this, but our whole system operates on the principle of compromise. Democracy doesn't work unless you're willing to give and take, and some people just don't want to give. They'll take it, but they don't want to give.

TS: Yes.

PS: But anyhow I did the best I could with it, and I feel good about it. In the long run things turned out pretty well, I think.

TS: I asked Bill Byrne this when I did an interview with him a couple of years ago. Who would you say had the most power in Cobb County in the last decade: developers or neighborhood associations or who really runs Cobb County?

PS: It's shifting, and I think it's changing for the good. When I came into office in 1988, the developers had a lead. They had the money, and they could make a lot of things happen. But now our county is filling up with people who have come here from God knows where, all over the country—Chicago. Now, they're here in Cobb County, benefitting from our good schools and the fact that we taxed ourselves to make them good; benefitting from our good roads, which we've taxed ourselves to do that. Now it's their home. And now that they're here, they don't want all this traffic. So they have become allies of the preservationists. I see the homeowner's groups as a complement to the preservation effort. The developers are having to deal with the homeowners and the preservationists. A good example is this Hamilton Road thing over here two years ago.

TS: Is that the one where you went to the commission?

PS: Yes. I knew that battlefield. I knew that not that many people knew about it. The homeowners had been over there and didn't want the density that they were going to get. So I went in there and made my pitch for the history. Between the homeowners and the preservationists we squeezed out ten acres of valuable property. The developers, buying over a hundred acres to put houses on, were paying fifty thousand dollars an acre, and we got ten acres of that. The key is that homeowners and preservationists have different motives, maybe, but we're on the same team in terms of we don't want any more traffic; we don't want any more build-out; and we don't want any more shopping centers. Just like this thing down at Burnt Hickory and Barrett Parkway the other day. They were going to put a mini-shopping center in there and take down Signal Hill there behind the Wallis House ten or fifteen feet and completely change the appearance of that whole area. The homeowners hopped on that, and Anne Rooney down here on Burnt Hickory Road took a lead. She's never been involved before. I've spoken to homeowner's associations, and I think we all understand that we help each other for different reasons.

TS: So preservation has become a quality of life issue?

PS: It is, it has. And developers are worried that they have to play by those rules now that they didn't have to play by before.

TS: So it sounds like what you're saying is that preservationists can't expect to have a 100 percent stopping of public projects, but they can be at the table and make the project better for the county.

PS: They have a place at the table. The commission is far more sensitive now than it was five

or six years ago even. I think homeowners are beginning to see what they can do when they unite. Jim Glover over here, he's been taking a lead, and John Sinclair on the city council, as public figures. Robert Crowe has been chairman of the Preservation Commission for several terms. I named him to the commission when I was in office. He's doing a bang-up job. He knows the history of the county, so he lets me know when something's coming up that I didn't know about. We worked with him and worked with homeowners.

TS: Right. How effective is the Historic Preservation Planner for Cobb County in influencing ...

PS: Well, if they'd return my phone calls I'd know.

TS: I wasn't really speaking about this particular incumbent, but, in general, do the commissioners listen to what the Preservation Planner has to say?

PS: They do and they don't. The Preservation Planner, historically in Cobb County, has had more planning than preservation duties. The [top people in the] planning department see them as their person and they load them down with regular planning responsibilities. So what happens is that the preservation planners that have been most efficient and effective have worked through the Preservation Commission. The Preservation Commission then gets in touch, for some of us that are outside the government now, to help. And there's one preservation planner especially that did an excellent job—Christi is her name.

TS: Yes, Trombetti.

PS: She's very interested in preservation, and she took the initiative several times. She's still with the county. But she's a planner. I see her when I go down there.

TS: I've got several other questions I wanted to ask you about your service on the commission. The first is what compelled you to run for commission chairman in the first place? Why in '88 did you decide to run? Did Kay put you up to it?

PS: No. [chuckle] When I told her that I was thinking about running for commission chairman, she said, "I don't want you to do it. I do not want you to do it." I said, "Well, come on Kay, get on the team here." She did get on the team, as you know, and she didn't miss a commission meeting for four years or a zoning meeting. She was just wrapped up in it. She was the personality in this team of two, and people liked her a lot. No, I was on the Preservation Commission. Earl Smith was having problems with Emmett Burton big time. So his term was up for re-election and Emmett's was too. Earl got out on Johnson's Ferry Road and made himself look ridiculous flagging traffic and trying to spread the word that Emmett Burton's sorry. Earl had an abrasive manner sometimes, a little bit arrogant sometimes. He would irritate a lot of people. So Frank Duncan—does that name surface?

TS: Yes, I know Frank.

PS: Frank and I were serving on the Preservation Commission. Linda Cater was chairing the commission at that time. We were ready to elect a [new] chairman for the Preservation Commission. So Frank called me early on in late spring and said, "Why don't you run for commission chairman?" I thought he was talking about the Preservation Commission. I said, "Well, you think I should?" He said, "Yeah, you ought to do that." I said, "Okay." He called me the next morning and said, "Phil, I've got your campaign headquarters all set up." I said, "What are you talking about?" I was too embarrassed to admit that I misunderstood him. So he told me commission chairman. Earl Smith's out. I said, "Frank, [he has] a war chest of over \$150,000, and I don't have a penny." He said, "Don't worry about it. I'll help you get some money." So I let it slide. I told Kay about it about that point, and she said something to the effect, "You're out of your mind." We pitched in and got together a little team of supporters. Kay and them and me to some extent, hammered on doors. There was an *Atlanta Journal Constitution* reporter, Katie—what was her name?

TS: Katie Long?

PS: Yes, she came and interviewed me early on. She said, "Why are you doing this? You know you don't have a chance." I said, "Well, I don't know. I think it'd be a good experience." And that's the God's truth. I had no idea that I would do well at all. I thought it would be good for the experience. So then about ten days before the election, suddenly, I have no explanation, I felt the phone calls were saying something different. They began coming in in large numbers and—"Can I help? Where can I send my contribution? Dah, dah, dah." Fred Bentley and I ran into each other, and Fred said, "You're going to win." And this is ten days before the election. I said, "You're crazy." Fred and I had worked on projects like Pickett's Mill over the years and the loop around the Sanger house and all of that. "Yeah, you're going to win." And he made a contribution. Now, I know Fred well enough to know that he's tuned into what's going on in the county, politics-wise, has been for years. So Katie came in the next day, and she said, "Are you still going to go through with this?" I said, "Yes, Katie, let me tell you something. Katie, I'm going to win this thing." About ten days before. And she looked at me like she thought I was crazy. I said, "I'll see you on election day." And so I went through with it.

The team supported me, and I knew I had a lot of votes because you don't teach school in a county for as long as I did, from 1961 to 1988, without running into a lot of people. So I knew I'd get a lot of those votes. But what really put the icing on the cake, Tom, was that Emmett Burton and Earl Smith's confrontation was embarrassing to a lot of people. So the Emmett people got on the phone. Election day came, and the first precinct came in. All the cameras were over at the Civic Center where Earl was set up. I was at the Trammell House. I had a little party on tap there. I thought I'd make a pretty good showing, but I had no idea I'd win, really. First precinct came in, and one of our assistants came running over with the news about it. For some reason I hadn't picked it up as quick as he had. His face was all lit up. I had won 60 percent of the votes. It was about that time that Earl's campaign manager, I've forgotten his name, began to question

whether the computers were messed up.

TS: I think that was Jim Lovejoy, wasn't it?

PS: That was it. Computers must be messed up. Got it reversed.

TS: Got it reversed, yes.

PS: So I went on that evening with 60 percent almost all the way down the line. And it began to dawn on me that it looked like I was going to have a job for four years that I wasn't really sure I wanted. So Fred pulled up in his big limousine at the front steps of the Trammell House, and we went over to the Civic Center where the cameras were. There was Katie. They interviewed me when it was over and, obviously, I had won it. I had so many mixed emotions, Tom. I'm a school teacher and a little football coaching in the background and, totally, no experience whatsoever. This job, the highest elected official in the county, was awesome, you know. So I did a lot of praying to try to handle this thing, I guarantee you. But I took it a step at a time. It was an experience that was 99 percent good. I wouldn't take anything in the world for it. It opened up dimensions that I would never have had the chance to encounter. [I would not have had the chance to] meet people, had I not had this experience. So Bill Kinney calls it the biggest political victory in recent history in Cobb County.

TS: Biggest upset, yes.

PS: I don't know about that, but I know that it was quite an experience. And for the most part it was a good experience.

TS: What do you look back on as your major achievements?

PS: Well, there are several that I like to think that I had a hand in moving forward. The Cobb County Convention Center. The commission had been talking some informally about this time, and John Williams was interested in that and some others were too and the Chamber of Commerce. There was one person who had been involved in putting (I think it was) Gwinnett County Convention Center together, and he had a model of it. You can't get more than two commissioners together at a time without being illegal unless it's an official meeting. So I took Harvey Paschal down first. We went down to this guy's office, saw it, talked about it. Then I took Thea Powell, then Harriet Smith. I couldn't get Emmett Burton to go with me. So we brought it up, put it on the agenda, moved forward with a commitment. We set up a team, a committee. I began chairing that committee, but I knew I didn't have time and didn't want to try to learn my way through that, so I nominated John Williams to chair that committee. I took a more passive role as we went forward with it. We went to New York and to the bond people and we got the funding for it. I think it's worked out great. It's a perfect place for a Convention Center.

TS: So you took the top floor of the Galleria Specialty Mall.

PS: Yes. We had four sites, I think, that we were looking at. I don't know if I should say this or not, but one of the sites was a partnership in which Otis Brumby was a member. And Otis hammered us to death on this site that we finally chose.

TS: So that's perhaps the reason for his opposition?

PS: You said it, and not me.

TS: Okay [chuckle]. Well, it sounded to me like Joe Mack Wilson was also conniving and manipulating to get a little bit of the money for a Marietta Conference Center out of that too.

PS: Very much so, and the Conference Center there, he put it to us over a period of weeks that this was a condition of Marietta proving this new point. But Joe Mack was a practical, realist kind of person. He knew he could demand too much and kill the whole thing. So we worked with him, and he worked with us, and he finally got that Convention Center over here, which, looking back on it now, we wonder how smart he was to insist on it.

TS: Yes. It certainly blew up on the politicians this last [election].

PS: Yes, it really did. Egg on their face all the way. But I think the Convention Center was a biggie. I think on a lesser scale the parking deck that we needed so much there in downtown Marietta. Mack Henderson and I were the ones primarily to get that going. Then we moved forward on the East-West Connector. Despite some frustrations, I think we moved forward on the preservation issue around the county.

TS: There's another issue at that time about garbage and the landfill filling up.

PS: I was hoping you wouldn't bring that up.

TS: [laughter]

PS: That was a low point for me in terms of frustration. The county had been assembling this acreage in northwest Cobb for twenty years, and as the county filled up with people . . .

TS: You're talking about the Pitner landfill site?

PS: Yes. As the county filled up with people, real estate agents were selling land nearby without telling the people. They knew what was going in there. So these people were putting up nice homes out there, and we probably didn't do as much as we could have from the permitting end of things in the county in terms of letting those houses take place. We moved in the direction of opening that landfill, because we were really filling up with the old site. There was more and more resistance from these new homeowners out there, coming in and hammering on us. Harriet, I think it was, suggested that there was nothing in east Cobb. Maybe we ought to be fair about it and get some possible sites

around the county. Do you believe it? They came up with eighteen sites? Eighteen headaches. I knew exactly what was going to happen.

TS: Everywhere a site was suggested you had . . .

PS: We had another delegation that showed up with a different colored jersey on. And it was chaos. The whole thing was an exercise in stupidity to bring up these other sites. They weren't sites. They were just a maneuver. So it had to go back to Pitner, and eventually that's where [the county] ends up doing it. But then the cost of doing a landfill with the different engineering that's required and the cost was escalating while we talked.

TS: Were you convinced that you could build a landfill without it getting into the ground water? Wasn't that one of the issues?

PS: That was one of the issues. I don't think any of us was convinced that we could do it. The engineers told us that there was a way of avoiding the problems, but it was expensive. We had one meeting one night on siting the landfill. The newspapers had been full of this stuff. I looked down [from the commission chairman's office]. I could see the Square below the window—crowds of people, every corner had a different colored tee-shirt on. And here was Channel 5, Channel 2. There were trucks rolled up to this corner, and a passive group suddenly went into action, waving arms and shouting and all that. The TV truck moved on to the next one, and then that group activated. We had a lot of people that came into the meeting hall. They lined up along the wall. They sat on the floor. All the seats were taken. About three minutes before the meeting was to take place the fire marshal came in.

TS: Too many people?

PS: He said, "Mr. Chairman, you can't have a meeting here until we get all these people up off the floor and all the ones leaning against the wall." So my job then, before we even get started, was to tell some of them that they had to go away. I didn't know whether I was going to survive the night or not [chuckle]. But we had fortunately set up monitors in the hall, even out in the parking lot, and to my great surprise, when I announced to them the meeting can't begin until we have nobody here that doesn't have a chair, they looked at me, and then they quietly filed out. I said, "Thank you" [chuckle]. The landfill is not a good thing to have to do. Another thing that caused a lot of friction was the moving of that cemetery over here [at Barrett Parkway and Barrett Lakes Boulevard].

TS: Yes. Edwards Attaway?

PS: Edwards . . . that caused a lot of friction. It just went on and on and on. And, of course, what is it? Nalley, who's the auto man, graded around this cemetery. So it was sitting up there like a crown. You remember this? It was so embarrassing. We start holding hearings following the state laws on it. People came out of the woodwork from DeKalb County—all over Georgia. "I've got ancestors buried there." They didn't know they had ancestors buried there, but they started reading the paper. Oh, man! Well, we finally got

that worked out, but that wasn't easy either.

TS: Well, that one went to court too, didn't it?

PS: Yes, it did go to court. That didn't help a lot either.

TS: No, I was disappointed with Mary Staley's ruling in that.

PS: Yes. I forgot, what did she say?

TS: Well, they moved the cemetery over to Noonday Baptist Cemetery area. [The Nalley site] is all leveled now. But she sided with the developer.

PS: Yes.

TS: Well, I know you were exporting garbage to Taylor County for a while.

PS: Yes, we were.

TS: Do we still export garbage in Cobb County?

PS: I wouldn't know. I know that we were exporting some of it as far south as Florida, but I don't know what they're doing now. Didn't keep up with that.

TS: Just one or two other quick questions if I could. Pat Salerno and that controversy as county manager. He got fired while you were commission chair, but I found in the Secrist papers [at Kennesaw State University] where you wrote a letter of recommendation for him even after he was fired. So I gather you weren't real happy to see him fired.

PS: I was not happy at all. I was especially unhappy with the manner in which it was done. Burton and Paschal wanted him to go from the get-go. Thea was using this as a threat to Salerno to get him to do what she wanted him to do. It reached the point that she decided that he had to go. The day that it was done I saw Paschal and Burton scurrying around here and there. I had no idea, none, not a clue what was going on, and Harriet didn't either. We got into the executive meeting, and Thea made the suggestion that Salerno be released. It was like a bombshell. I said, "What in the world. . . ? How did this come about?" "Well, there's three of us, and we want him to go." And he was sitting right there. I said, "Pat, did you have any forewarning that this was coming?" And I could tell by his face that it struck him cold. Harriet and I spoke up against it in the meeting, and we both thought it was an outrage. That's when Otis got the Superior Court to release the tape of the executive meeting. It appeared verbatim in the newspaper. I thought Pat had been done wrong. He wasn't perfect. He didn't have the people skills that he should have had. He didn't get out and learn his county. I offered to take him around the county and introduce him to people and let him see the county, but he was an office man—a lot of talent, a lot of knowledge, but he just wasn't sure of himself in public. So he went. I

wrote a nice letter. Would you know, every now and then I get a call from Pat Salerno, even now. He's got yet another job he's applying for and wants a recommendation for it. I give it to him every time. He came from Savannah to Cobb County, and he didn't like the politics down there, he said. But in every other way he was a good man. I think he was as honest as he could be, and, quite frankly, I think he got done wrong. It was not the way to handle it.

TS: Whose idea was it to bring Mack Henderson in?

PS: Mine. I had seen Mack at the Downtown Marietta Development Authority. By this time I was getting a little smarter in politics. So I went to each of the commissioners beforehand, and I said, "Hey, look, here's a guy who's available. He's experienced. He's got people skills. He can make something happen. He can take some of the political heat off the rest of us." So they all agreed. The night that Mack was to be appointed, it was on the agenda. Our meetings were lasting to midnight. I was trying to get the consent agenda idea, and it was a hard sale.

TS: Oh, you didn't have a consent agenda then?

PS: We didn't have a consent agenda when I first came in. I worked on getting some kind of parliamentary rules because we didn't have any of those. But, anyhow, that night, I want you to believe it was two o'clock in the morning! Mack was sitting back in the back. We had been arguing and debating and bickering about this, that and something else. It was a full night. I said, "Well, Mack we're down to your item now. I wouldn't blame you after this meeting if you just walked out the door right now." I read the item, and I asked him if he was still interested. He nodded, so I made the motion, and we approved it 100 percent. Mack was a lifesaver for me. What I was trying to do was to take what I thought were sensible ideas of running a county off the political burner. All of us as elected officials were said to have some hidden agenda and that we were some petty thing. So if Mack would come in and operate the county as a professional and with the people skills he had, I thought it would be a lot better for all of us. For the most part it worked out that way. But Mack took a lot of heat, especially from Otis Brumby. Mack was not a happy camper at the end of the term. But I see him every now and then, and every time I think of him, I think, "Thank goodness Mack, I'm glad you didn't walk out that night" [chuckle].

TS: One last thing we haven't talk about; CCT [Cobb Community Transit] came in while you were chair.

PS: That was up front. They had started under Earl's administration. We were in the process of implementing it in several different ways. First of all, we had to decide who the operator was going to be. There were two or three that were qualified. We went out to Seattle and saw their operation out there. So we got what we thought was our best offer. We chose the type of bus, and then we had a ton of fun deciding on the color. The ladies especially enjoyed that. I'll never forget the day that the buses came and they invited me and Kay to go out there in that big parking lot and drive a bus [chuckle].

I've got to tell you one other story. I never have had this experience but one time. Harry Ingram was the director of our water and sewer. I'd been in office about a half a year or so. He called me one morning early, and he said, "Mr. Chairman, you need to come on down here. A water main broke down here at Cooper Lake." So I said, "Okay, I'll be right down there." I thought, what do I do? One of those fun things, you know. So we got down there, and he had this big bit, about from the pillars there to the door, with three or four men down at the bottom there digging down to that water main. There was mud and everything else. So Harry gave us a hard hat and boots up to our knees, and he said, "Follow me." He had some brush and a few broken pieces of plank over this mud, leading to the bit. Harry weighs about 125 pounds dripping wet, and I'm 250. So I was traipsing along behind him, and my foot slid off the board into the mud and formed a suction. I couldn't get my boot out of the mud. Now, here I was, the leader of the county, and these people in the ditch saw all this, and they pretended they didn't see it. Then my other foot slipped in, and I was stuck. The Chairman of the Commission with both feet stuck in the mud and nobody cracking up. No one except her. She was hooting. You could hear her all across Cooper Lake. She thought it was the funniest thing in the world. And then the man got out of the hole in the ground with a shovel and started digging me out.

TS: Life's embarrassing moments.

PS: That was an experience. Anything else, Tom?

TS: Well, I think we've pretty well covered it.

PS: Well, it's been fun.

TS: I've enjoyed it too.

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